

U.S. steak houses to be overwhelmed upon airmen's return

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Throughout this long journey called "Bright Star" I have often wondered what food concoctions I would eat if I were able to choose anything I could for my first meal home. The thought of what wondrous foods I would like to tear into once I finished my journey back home crossed my mind from time to time, and I knew others had experienced this as well.

I took this quest to find what people wanted to eat once they arrived back home – not to be confused with what they wanted to do once they got back home. I had to carefully word my question by saying, "If you had a choice to eat anything you wanted for your first meal back in the states, what would it be?"

There were mixed responses, people citing various hometown and franchise restaurants, special

dishes, home cooked meals, but the overwhelming response was steak, with Outback Steakhouse being the unanimous choice.

Often breaking into what seemed a serious conversation, I would approach with the light-hearted question of the first dish back home. The conversation would stop and all would immediately switch into a deep thinking mode, struggling to recall all the restaurants within a five-mile radius of their home or work. They would work to reconstruct every type of conceivable dish. What would that all-important choice be?

Somehow, such a small question would spark an almost endless conversation about every food item that came to mind from fast food and grease, to surf and turf.

MSgt. Bill Dow, 75th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, went into an animated description about his ideal trip to Big Z's Restaurant, a gruff truck stop type diner, where he could get an omelet six inches

off the plate with hot cheese spread poured over the top. Then the waitress would bring over a huge platter of bacon that would "bleed" grease onto the table as she slammed it down.

Some didn't have a particular dish in mind, but a restaurant. Cracker Barrel, Outback Steakhouse, the Waffle House and Golden Corral were all popular choices.

"I would order a 21-ounce Porterhouse steak, followed by a bourbon on the rocks," answered SrA James White, 75th Expeditionary Medical Support Squadron.

Others insisted on having a home cooked meal, to some it didn't matter what it was, as long as it came from home. Collard greens seemed to pop up in many conversations, I think most of those responses came from Shaw AFB folks. Fried catfish and macaroni and cheese, another delicacy to be partaken by a fellow airman.

SSgt. James Wilson, 75th ECES, said he wanted a huge T-bone

steak, potatoes and frozen corn. He was very particular about making sure the corn was the kind bought in those bags found in the frozen food aisle.

Breakfast dishes consisting of waffles, bacon piled high, biscuits and gravy. "All-you-can-eat" restaurants were also a big hit.

Meals varied from good home cookin' to elegant meals served in fancy restaurants that teased the appetite throughout a series of courses. Everyone had well planned out meals, complete with the company they would share and the perfect ambiance.

"Grooper stuffed with crab at 'The Back Porch Restaurant' would be my first meal, and of course a round of golf to go along with," said Maj. Karen Jones, 75th EMEDS.

One common link that brought everyone together is that everyone wanted that good ole' American food – and the funny thing about that is that could be just about anything under the sun.

Preparing for change upon redeployment

By Chaplain (Capt.) Gregory Jans
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Change is what reunions are all about. We all know that Bright Star – 01/02 hasn't been a typical deployment, reunions won't be typical either.

Many members of Team Qui Web have been so since before the Sept. 11 bombings in New York. The bombing changed the way we had to do business here, and for us heading home, it certainly has changed business in America. Life is different there. It's wise to be aware of the circumstances and the impact that it's had on your family, friends and will have on you. Listening will be invaluable. Open communication will be strengthening.

Homecoming, is a time to renew intimacy, to discover what changes have occurred in each person, to determine what directions one's

growth has taken, and to somehow "meld" all of this into a worthwhile ongoing relationship.

Homecoming brings joys to be shared. But separations are a strain on any relationship. Yet many families expect the long awaited homecoming to solve all of their problems. Will it? Of course not, but it's normal to build fantasies of what it will be like when your spouse returns. But fantasies are just that, fantasies. You will hear two themes in regards to the "Period of Adjustment." These themes are awareness and renegotiations.

Go carefully with sex. Your sexual relationship with your spouse may be awkward at first, perhaps quite different from what you had imagined. This is not at all unusual, as you both might be feeling tense. Talk about it. Do not feel you have to reestablish sexual intimacy immediately. This comes naturally for some couples, while others feel more comfortable getting to know one another again. Court your spouse again to get the feeling right. This process may

take a few hours or a few days. Whatever works best for your relationship should be your major concern.

Take it easy with the children in terms of discipline. For a while, stick with the rules your spouse has established during your absence. Immediately playing the "heavy" will not open up opportunities for you and the children to get to know one another again. It's not difficult to understand why some children are afraid of the returning parent if all they have to look forward to is a "changing of the guard." On the other hand, sometimes it is easy to spoil your children. If you haven't seen them for a large period of time, or you are home for short periods of time, you may find yourself not wanting to discipline them. You are probably eager to make up for the time you were unable to spend with them. This is certainly understandable, but do not put your spouse in the position of constantly playing the "heavy" while you have all the fun with the children.

